

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Minutes

**Tuesday, 25 March 2014
Boardroom, London**

Present

UK Statistics Authority

Sir Andrew Dilnot (Chair)
Professor David Rhind
Professor Sir Adrian Smith
Mr Partha Dasgupta
Ms Carolyn Fairbairn
Dame Moira Gibb
Professor David Hand
Mr Ed Humpherson
Dr David Levy
Ms Jil Matheson
Mr Glen Watson

Secretariat

Mr Robert Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Apologies

Dame Colette Bowe

Other Attendees

Mr Guy Goodwin and Ms Laura Dewis (for item 6)
Mr Paul Layland (for items 7 and 8)

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Dame Colette Bowe.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. Minutes, matters arising from previous meetings

- 3.1 The Chair reported on the topics discussed at the Non-Executive Session that had taken place prior to the start of the meeting:
- i. Mr Dasgupta had announced that he would soon step down as non-executive director and Chair of the Audit Committee;
 - ii. informal appraisals of all non-executive directors would take place in due course;
 - iii. the governance arrangements of the Authority were being reviewed and a paper with proposals for adjustments would be considered at the May meeting of the Authority Board; and
 - iv. interviews for the new Authority Chief Executive would be taking place on 31 March.
- 3.2 The Chair and the Board thanked Mr Dasgupta for his invaluable contribution to the work of the Statistics Authority.
- 3.3 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2014 were agreed.

4. Authority Chair's Report

- 4.1 The Chair reported on his recent activities, which included a meeting with the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee, Bernard Jenkin MP, and representatives from the Royal Statistical Society; and a meeting with the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude MP, regarding options for the future provision of population statistics. The Chair would be giving the first Roger Jowell Memorial Lecture on 27 March.

5. Reports from Authority Committee Chairs

Office for National Statistics (ONS) Boards

- 5.1 Professor Smith reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 12 February, which had considered the draft budget for 2014/15, the ONS Business Plan, and the National Statistics Quality Review of Labour Market Statistics.
- 5.2 Professor Smith also reported on the meeting of the ONS Board held on 18 March, which had considered the pay settlement for 2014/15, the supply of data from the Bank of England to ONS, and workforce planning.

Committee for Official Statistics

- 5.3 Professor Rhind reported on the meeting of the Committee for Official Statistics held on 20 March, which had considered strategic issues in relation to the European Statistical System, the National Statistics Publication Hub, and an outline for a Monitoring Review about income statistics.

Assessment Committee

- 5.4 Professor Rhind reported on the meeting of the Assessment Committee held on 20 March. The Committee had considered a draft of revised criteria for assessment, an update on progress with Monitoring Reviews on the audit of administrative data and on the use of deflators, and draft Assessment Reports including on Short Term Economic Output Indicators and statistics on well-being.

6. ONS Website – Review and Next Steps [SA(14)08]

- 6.1 Mr Watson provided an update on progress with a review of the ONS website, following recent problems in implementing taxonomy changes which had culminated in the website being taken down for several hours on 31 January, and the implications of these problems on plans to improve the website. The Authority Board had previously discussed these issues at its meeting of 6 February.
- 6.2 The Board expressed concern that the cause of the problem had not yet been identified. It was agreed that it was vital that a robust contingency plan was in place for when problems were encountered, to enable rapid recovery and ensure business continuity.
- 6.3 The Board discussed the need for independent assurance of the website and its systems. Mr Watson reported that an external company, Thoughtworks, had been brought in to conduct a review.
- 6.4 The Authority Board on 1 May would further consider:
- i. ONS's understanding of what caused the failure of 31 January;
 - ii. a high level description of what could be done in the short term to improve the stability of the site (with further detail to follow at a later date);
 - iii. a robust contingency plan and;
 - iv. a plan to enable deployment of further upgrades to the current site, what sources of assurance could be provided to substantiate this, and what dependencies or trade-offs there might be.
- 6.5 The Board would also be provided with medium-term strategic options for the website, including consideration of alternative approaches to in-house development and management.

7. End year Financial Report [SA(14)09]

- 7.1 Mr Layland introduced a paper which provided an update on the financial position of the Authority.
- 7.2 The resource budget (excluding depreciation) was forecast to outturn at an underspend position of £1.7 million. The Board noted that the depreciation budget was subject to variances as a result of assumptions about the useful economic lives of assets, and these assumptions were sometimes extended beyond the initial intended lifespan, particularly at times when investment was restricted. There was a risk that overly extending the lifespan of some assets, such as IT systems, could lead to inefficiency and degradation of performance.

8. Budget 2014/15 [SA(14)10]

- 8.1 Mr Layland introduced a paper which provided the Board with details of budget planning for 2014/15.
- 8.2 The Board welcomed the update and noted that more information and narrative was included in this document than had been the case in previous budgets. Following discussion the budget was approved.

9. Pre-release Access Reduction Exercise

- 9.1 Mr Watson provided an update on ONS's pre-release access reduction exercise. The October 2013 meeting of the Authority Board had heard that the exercise had determined that pre-release access could be reduced significantly. Since then, Government Departments had been given an opportunity to challenge ONS's proposals on access reductions. Eight departments had challenged the proposals, and provided further

information. ONS had now concluded its consideration of these challenges. The National Statistician would announce her final decisions in due course.

10. Revised Criteria for Assessment [SA(14)11]

10.1 Mr Humpherson introduced a paper which proposed a series of criteria to enable the development of a prioritised, strategic Assessment Programme. The criteria had been discussed at the recent Assessment Committee meeting and had been revised in light of comments.

10.2 The Board welcomed the proposals and agreed that the criteria should be adopted.

10.3 It was noted that the new criteria emphasised that an Assessment Report's value lay in its impact. The meeting considered the different kinds of impact that Assessment could have, which included driving improvements to statistics to maximise the public value that could be derived from them, and giving meaning to the National Statistics standard. It was agreed that there was scope for further consideration of the kinds of impact that Assessment should have.

11. Administrative Data Research Network Governing Board

11.1 Mr Bumpstead provided an update on the Administrative Data Research Network Governing Board. Non-executive members had now been appointed to the Board and the first meeting would be held on 14 April, chaired by Professor David Hand.

12. Authority Strategy Report on Progress 2013/14 [SA(14)12]

12.1 Mr Bumpstead provided an overview of progress with delivering the Authority Strategy.

12.2 The meeting noted the update and agreed that information provided to future meetings would be on an exception reporting basis, in accordance with the proposals set out in the following paper

13. Authority Strategy Review, Prioritisation and Delivery [SA(14)13]

13.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper which set out suggested amendments to the Authority Strategy for consideration as part of the annual review, and a revised emphasis for the 2014/15 reporting period featuring prioritisation and high level assessments of performance.

13.2 The Board considered the relative priority of different elements of the Authority Strategy. These priorities might change throughout the year and would be kept under regular review.

13.3 It was agreed that the Authority would adopt new progress reporting arrangements, featuring exception reporting, the Board's assessment of relative priority, senior executives' assessments of performance, and clearer deliverables which focused on outcomes.

13.4 Amendments to the strategy were discussed and would be considered further via correspondence.

14. Any other business

14.1 There was no other business. The Authority Board would meet next on 1 May 2014 at 12:00 in London.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Agenda

Tuesday, 25 March 2014
Board Room, London, 12:00 – 16:00
[Non-Executive Session 12:00 – 13:00]

Chair: Sir Andrew Dilnot
Apologies: Dame Colette Bowe

1	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings Declarations of interest	Meeting of 060214
2	Authority Chair's Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic Statistics• Future of the Census• ONS Website	Oral report Sir Andrew Dilnot
3	Reports from Authority Committee Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ONS Board• Committee for Official Statistics and Assessment Committee	Oral reports Professor Sir Adrian Smith Professor David Rhind
4	ONS Website – Review and Next Steps	SA(14)08 Mr Glen Watson
5	End year Financial Report 2013/14	SA(14)09 Mr Paul Layland
6	Budget 2014/15	SA(14)10 Mr Paul Layland
7	Pre-release Access Reduction Exercise	Oral Update Mr Glen Watson
8	Revised Criteria for Assessment	SA(14)11 Mr Ed Humpherson
9	Administrative Data Research Network Governing Board - Update	Oral Update Professor David Hand Mr Robert Bumpstead
10	Authority Strategy Report on Progress 2013/14	SA(14)12 Mr Robert Bumpstead
11	Workshop: Authority Strategy 2014/15 Review, Prioritisation and Delivery	SA(14)13 Mr Robert Bumpstead
12	Any Other Business	

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)08

ONS Website - Review and Next Steps**Purpose**

1. This paper provides Board members with an update on the review following the difficulties with deploying the new subject taxonomy and the implications for our plans to improve the website going forward.

Timing

2. Urgent.

Recommendations

3. The Authority Board are invited to:
 - i. comment on the on-going review and whether members feel it is sufficient to give them the assurance they require;
 - ii. discuss the current position and advise on the initial lessons to be learned; and
 - iii. discuss future plans going forward and how members wish to be engaged.

Discussion

4. To address the ongoing criticisms of the ONS website from users as quickly as possible, we invested in making improvements to the existing site through 2013/14 as part of the Improving Dissemination Programme and Web Data Access project. This work focused on the areas of the highest value for users – primarily search, navigation and accessibility, as well as the speed of 09:30 publishing and the Application Programming Interface / Data Explorer functionality that enables data to be disseminated in open data formats.
5. Progress during 2013/14 has generally been good and, while the website remains "work in progress", feedback from users has recognised the improvement. Other key improvements were nearing completion, including further changes to search and navigation. We planned then to focus attention on a refreshed digital strategy from Summer 2014, including potentially the rationalisation of the current website estate (which includes the Neighbourhood Statistics Service and NOMIS sites) and options for the build of a new alpha site as it is acknowledged that the existing ONS website is complex, expensive to maintain and difficult to update.
6. However, at the end of January 2014, the deployment of the new subject taxonomy, designed to help site navigation, caused site instability despite significant testing work. Following difficulties with identifying the root cause of the problem, we had to roll back to the original taxonomy. This caused a reputational risk at the time and attracted some criticism from users, especially on social media.
7. Given the problems with the deployment, Authority members asked for a paper to be submitted for this meeting setting out how ONS proposed to review what had happened, the technical and cultural issues and, in doing so, involve expert independent challenge. This should include plans to review the technical issues, governance and risk management processes and the maturity and capability of ONS to maintain and develop its website further. Since then, and as agreed, we have worked with Non Executive Directors to specify and implement a programme of assurance work.

Review and Assurance Work

8. The current "pause and review" has an impact on programme deliverables and costs so we have proceeded with the review work and maintained a log of progress. **Annex A** has the latest update with a mapping to the themes discussed, as well as a short note on Thoughtworks, a Government Digital Service (GDS) approved supplier on the Digital Services Framework, who are helping provide external challenge and assurance.
9. The first four strands of assurance in **Annex A** are the most pressing and can be summarised as follows:
 - i. Investigations into the issues with the recent deployment of taxonomy changes to understand the cause of the problems and what actions could be taken to resolve them. These are ongoing, using external contractor resource not initially involved with the taxonomy implementation, with a view to their completion by 21 March. A verbal update will be given at the meeting. At the time of writing, the source of the implementation problem remains unidentified so there is a risk that this uncertainty remains. Thoughtworks have agreed to help with this work and to provide external assurance of whether what we have done is thorough and appropriate.
 - ii. Review wider Programme and Project Management (PPM) lessons: what happened, specifically on taxonomy changes, in terms of programme governance, risk identification, mitigation and escalation, and any lessons for other projects. An external Major Projects Authority Gateway Review of the Improving Dissemination Programme was conducted in the week following the unsuccessful taxonomy implementation. This was a wider review, including governance and risks, and the report is attached at **Annex B** with a RAG status of "Amber". There is a short summary of the findings at the front of the report. In addition to this review, a small team (which included the Gateway Review leader to provide external assurance) looked more specifically at the Taxonomy implementation. The team concluded that we could better align responsibility and control with respect to the website and that some improvements could be made to risk identification and management within the programme and across projects and the office, while noting that these may not have prevented the taxonomy issues arising. They also felt the impact of the implementation might have been better mitigated by having a clearly agreed formal plan (Stay / No Stay) with improved communications to minimise impact.
 - iii. Review whether we can safely deploy further planned changes to website. Provide technical assurance on the risks associated with the Web Data Access deployment of Releases 5 and 6, and further improvements to the ONS website (including taxonomy and search), together with advice on what can be done to reduce the risks. Thoughtworks is conducting this work over a 20 day period (likely to start 17 March). The main concern is that if we do not get to the bottom of the taxonomy problem, then there will inevitably be a higher degree of uncertainty and a degree of unknown risk going forward with possible future deployments. This is of particular concern if the website is at "tipping point".
 - iv. To provide assurance that the new plan for developing our website is sound and deliverable. Will be in two parts – plans for a new "alpha" site and plans for any further development of the current site. This will partly depend on the outcome to the existing investigations, above. We intend to draw on GDS expertise and the Open Data Institute (who is already involved) for assurance in the initial phase of drawing up and developing the plans for the alpha site. We will also draw on the range of other reviews and assurances regarding plans for any further developments to the existing site, including possibly Thoughtworks or an alternative. Once the plans are at a more advanced stage, we will engage further

with our users and stakeholders, as well as seeking additional external assurance on the suitability of those plans.

Current Position and Lessons from Reviews

10. The main difficulty is that we have not been able to identify the underlying cause of the taxonomy deployment problem. At the time of this paper, we can report on what we have discounted as the root cause of the problems, but we are unable to say anything conclusive. Improvements are on hold and it is uncertain what benefits we can gain from the 2013/14 investment in the development of code.
11. If we do find the root cause, we will estimate the costs and timescales of fixing the problem and make a value for money judgement, along with a risk assessment, about whether to continue with improvements to the existing site. With risks, we will:
 - i. await the results of external assurance to give us confidence that we could deploy the fixes safely;
 - ii. await the results of external assurance to give us confidence that we could deploy any other code (and content) to the site safely;
 - iii. look to go live with Web Data Access Release 5 first to enable us to utilise an environment for improved testing of any ongoing developments to the ONS website (this is an emerging recommendation from our assurance work); and
 - iv. we intend to stop investigations at the end of March or in early April, having explored the obvious avenues and engaged the most skilled contractors in the ONS, as well as external assurance.
12. It is possible that the external assurers will advise us to not make any further improvements to the existing website, effectively suggesting that we keep the site "as is" until we introduce a new website. In the event of a "worst case scenario", that it is not advisable to make any code changes to the site *at all*(for example, bug fixes), we will need to prepare to execute our business continuity plans which detail how we will:
 - maintain the ability to publish content, to schedule, to the ONS website and in line with the Code of Practice for official statistics; and
 - invoke publishing via an emergency website in the event that the ability to publish to the ONS website is compromised.
13. This includes mitigating the critical risks associated with this worst-case scenario. We will limit reputational damage, including through a communications plan.
14. Irrespective of (11), there are already some important lessons emerging from the assurance exercise that we need to learn in relation to how we are currently operating. They include:
 - i. better aligning responsibility and control;
 - ii. having just one website project under one Senior Responsible Owner;
 - iii. our fragility and dependency on a small number of IT staff and contractors;
 - iv. how we operate Agile and the benefits of co-location; and
 - v. strengthening some programme elements including risk management.
15. The recent issues have also brought into greater focus weaknesses in how we monitor the site, test and bug fix (for example, we have already commissioned the acquisition of a log auditing tool to ensure we can more effectively monitor and filter logs from the website).

16. Although overarching responsibility for the website is with the Digital Publishing Deputy Director, reporting to the Analysis and Dissemination Director, in practice there are several players across directorates and projects with varying degrees of control and there is unhealthy competition for scarce IT resources. While moving teams to be co-located is not currently realistic, it is clear we need to implement an improved operational model including:
- a single Agile web team established and matrix-managed by our Digital Publishing Division, which would include Digital and IT staff; and
 - an identified core of IT staff dedicated, full time, to working on the ONS website, with short-term specialist skills brought in as necessary. We are currently unable to work Agile as staff are not dedicated and are moved to work on other projects leading to lack of continuity and communication issues, as well as additional overhead.
17. We also intend to refocus the Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP), bringing it and the Web Data Access project together to have just one web programme. This programme will focus on the critical issue of getting a good website, be consistent with the Digital Strategy and focused short term on the key blocks of work that still need doing: the changes to be made to the current website (if possible), the development of a new website and the delivery of open datasets across the office. This will enable better focus, improved transparency of the health of the programme and give the team a very focused end point. The other IDP work packages on digital capability, products and partnerships will be baselined and delivered through business change processes. The Web Data Access (WDA) project will be integrated with IDP and then closed down.

Current position of the Web Data Access project

18. WDA release 4 (R4) comprised beta versions of the Applications Programming Interface (API) and Data Explorer and went live in October 2013. Feedback from this release has been positive, with users finding it clear, intuitive and giving a professional face to ONS statistics.
- The metadata is easy to find." Many users also stated their need for the other features planned for R5, specifically including, the additional 'area first' user journey. They have been waiting for this functionality for several months and expectations are high following demonstrations and their involvement in the testing and development. The feedback from the demonstrations in particular has been overwhelmingly positive.
19. Work to deliver R5 has almost completed. Development and functional testing are complete. Performance testing is currently on hold but once re-started should complete within two to three weeks. A further two weeks is needed to stabilise the release, deploy and go live. The next available deployment window is early May and WDA is 'pencilled' in for this deployment. WDA is mostly stand alone and so, unlike taxonomy, has few interfaces the rest of the website. We are looking at a number of options for deployment, including parallel running alongside the live website.
20. WDA Release 5 (R5) focuses on extending the functionality available on the Data Explorer, which will enable users to be able to:
- i. 'slice the data' by topic;
 - ii. customise datasets, enabling comparison across geographies and/or time;
 - iii. chart the data and be able to save, print and share these on social media;
 - iv. thematically map the data and be able to save, print and share these on social media; and
 - v. search for data available for specified geography - "area first" search.

21. WDA has been running for two and a half years, at a cost £16 million. Preparations for release of R5 are well underway, and once performance testing is re-started, we will be within about a month of launching the full functionality. Without R5, ONS will not be able to release non-Census datasets through the API or Data Explorer. Demonstrations have been given to ONS and British Telecom (BT) executives (including Clive Selley, BT Main Board) and BT have been planning to host a launch event in the BT Tower.

Issues arising from Assurance Reviews

22. Plans are being, or in due course will be, put in place to address all of the detailed issues coming out of the various assurance reviews. These will be provided to the ONS Board, along with a future assurance approach for the website which will include increasing substantially our engagement with external stakeholders, including website experts.

Plans for a New Website

23. It was the intention to start the process of planning for and developing a new website as part of the second year of IDP, while recognising that its development would extend beyond the end of the programme's closure in March 2015. This is built into the existing business case and some funding is already allocated to the work. Typically, it can take about three years to mature a good site, before it needs to be rewritten. Quite a lot of thinking has already gone into how best to take forward the work on an Alpha build. The development will be an integral part of our reworked digital strategy which is currently being produced, covering all elements of "digital" including dissemination and data collection, and which will replace our current website strategy.
24. The recent issues almost certainly make this work more urgent and will mean that we will need to focus more resource short term on the various options for the new website and how it can be delivered. The Authority has indicated previously that it wishes to be engaged in that process, which we can do through regular reports to the Board, and/or through offering workshops for Authority members about key issues, and/or through having a small sub-group of Board members who we can regularly keep abreast of progress. We are open to Authority Board members' views on how best to engage with this programme of work going forward.
25. Our current intention is to recruit and focus a delivery team on the re-development of the website. The new Delivery team will adopt user-centred design including testing at every stage of development with real users, and Agile delivery including continuous integration and automated testing enabling regular, iterative releases.
26. We intend to build an end-to-end web publishing prototype platform, including a front-end user experience. The proposal is that this work builds on code that has already been produced by the Government Digital Service. Where appropriate, their work will be reused to reduce costs and increase interoperability across government statistical outputs. This project will focus on extending the capability to better serve the needs of users of statistics.
27. ONS has already engaged the Open Data Institute to act as technical advisors throughout the Alpha stage of the development. They will provide expert opinion and support the ONS digital leadership throughout the project. Full Fact, an independent fact checking organisation and prominent user of ONS data, has also been already engaged as a 'critical friend' and expert user representative. In parallel to the work, we will need to look at other aspects of business change, including the publishing model, which devolves publishing activity to 300 staff in the statistical business areas.

28. In order for the delivery team to succeed, it will require:
- i. a commitment by everyone involved in the project to work Agile, including the senior leadership;
 - ii. a delivery team procured and managed through the Programme using a co-sourcing model, blending internal and external expertise;
 - iii. the delivery team to make quick decisions on behalf of the organisation, within an agreed framework; and
 - iv. buy-in to developing a "Minimum Viable Product".
29. We are in the process of recruiting a Head of Digital Transformation to lead our options work on the website, and the new development more generally, as well as procuring external expertise to work with us. The Alpha site work will be led by our Digital Publishing Division (within the IDP programme framework), working with the external supplier, and using some 'consultancy' time from ONS technical staff. Possible roles and responsibilities in the redevelopment of the new ONS website are set out at **Annex C**, although these are still being worked up.

Conclusion

30. In summary, the assurance review work is progressing but the cause of the taxonomy problem has yet to be identified. We need to wait until the completion of the work until we will be able to firmly draw conclusions and we can assess the risk of making further incremental changes. There will inevitably always be some level of risk but it may be difficult to quantify this in the absence of a firm cause.
31. The assurance work has identified some improvements that already can be made to the existing website project (and office projects more generally). Issues raised include better aligning responsibility and control, having just one website project under one Senior Responsible Owner, our fragility and dependency on a small number of IT staff and contractors, how we operate Agile and the benefits of co-location, and strengthening some programme elements including risk management. We will act on all of the issues coming out of the various assurance reviews and report on these to the ONS Board, along with providing them with a future assurance approach for the website.
32. The taxonomy deployment issue has reinforced our intention to start the process of planning for and developing a new website, as part of the second year of IDP. Some thinking has already gone into the way that we might do this and our plans are being worked up. Future plans will also include any incremental changes we can make to the existing website. These plans will be externally assured and both GDS and the Open Data Institute will be involved in the development work.

**Guy Goodwin (Senior Responsible Owner) and Laura Dewis (Programme Director),
Improving Dissemination Programme, ONS, March 2014**

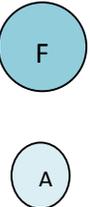
List of Annexes

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| Annex A | Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline |
| Annex B | Final Version of the Major Projects Authority Gateway Review on the Improving Dissemination Programme |
| Annex C | Roles and responsibilities in the redevelopment of the new ONS website |

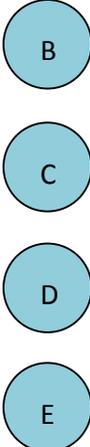
SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
1	Investigations into issues with recent deployment of taxonomy changes	To understand the cause of the problems and what actions could be taken to resolve them.	<p>UNDERWAY but continuing to get inconsistent results and currently unable to identify and resolve the problem . Two weeks further work was considered important to have explored all sensible testing options.</p> <p>We will identify the problem or the work will result in a narrative of what has been attempted and the difficulties we have encountered. A documented audit trail will describe our understanding of the problem, whether the rollback has weakened the site, and what the investigation tells us.</p> <p>ThoughtWorks have agreed to to review the documented process and provide a final layer of assurance that what has been done is appropriate and thorough.</p> <p>All testing and results are being documented and QA'd by Ritin Patel.</p> <p>Security concerns have been raised about giving Thoughtworks access to our systems, and we are working through these to minimise any potentials for delays.</p>	<p>To be completed by 21 March.</p> <p>Additional external contractor resource is already in place.</p> <p>Added assurance, eg. ThoughtWorks, to be discussed 10/3.</p>	Terry Compton	<p>Internal ONS staff.</p> <p>Additional external contractor resource (not involved to date in the taxonomy work and who have worked on our Web Data Access project) is to help us with this work for two weeks.</p> <p>ThoughtWorks, or alternative, for final layer of assurance.</p>	ELT	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

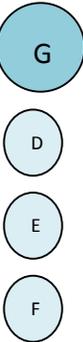
Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
2	Review wider PPM lessons	Establish what happened, specifically on taxonomy changes, in terms of programme governance, risk identification, mitigation and escalation, and any lessons for other projects.	<p>COMPLETE.</p> <p>TOR agreed by Neil and Guy. Engaged Andy Spriggs (MPA approved assurance reviewer).</p> <p>Draft findings went to ELT on 25 Feb. Final report by 28 Feb.</p> <p>Key actions following report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeds in to workstream 4 (new plan). • Findings will be communicated to all projects / programmes via Portfolio Scrutiny Committee. • Take forward risk management recommendations with Risk team. • Rationalise website risks via Digital Board. <p>Key messages/lessons will be reported in paper to Authority Board (consistent with item 4).</p>	End February	Neil Wooding	<p>PDU (Nicky Bloomer, Sue Mulcahy) and Andy Spriggs, Major Projects Authority approved assurance reviewer. Norma Wood (acting Head of MPA) supports this.</p> <p>Andy Spriggs was the leader of recent IDP Gateway review (familiar with background, so faster) – not to repeat Gateway, but to drill down into specific aspects.</p>	ELT, and possibly ONS Board	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
3	Review whether we can safely deploy planned changes to web site	Provide technical assurance on the risks associated with the WDA deployment of Releases 5 and 6, and also any further attempts to deploy improvements to the ONS website (including taxonomy and search), together with advice on what can be done to reduce the risks.	<p>SETTING UP. Pulling together relevant information that would be required by external reviewer.</p> <p>Putting together tender for Thoughtworks. Preparing documentation etc for review. Also exploring options for de-risking deployments, and working through implications of delaying deployment of Release 5.</p> <p>Assessment underway of financial and commercial impacts of any forced delay. Initial internal assessment is that WDA Release 5 is lower risk than the taxonomy deployment, and each month this is delayed will cost between £300k and £400k. We are currently looking at what other work contractors can be used on in the Office during the delays.</p> <p>A number of options have been worked up with associated cost estimates. Wave 5 looks feasible to complete with minimal risk but we need external assurance on this.</p> <p>We are suggesting that our chosen external assurers make WDA their first priority, then the investigation into the issues with the taxonomy</p>	<p>Met with ThoughtWorks 10 March to discuss them undertaking an initial assessment of documentation, talking with key staff, scoping the work and providing timings and costs. ThoughtWorks have confirmed that the work required is reasonable and they can undertake it for us. A programme of work is currently in design and full costings are expected to be received shortly. Initial indications show costs to be affordable. We are working with procurement and aim to start this work on 17 March.</p> <p>Initial assessment of risks and options for risk reduction by early April.</p> <p>Note: The Web Data Access project Release 5 was planned for 8/9 March, but has been delayed to allow this review to take place.</p> <p>Potential remedial actions arising from any recommendations will need to be planned.</p>	Ian Cope Guy Goodwin	Thoughtworks, a GDS approved supplier on the Digital Services Framework.	ELT, then Authority Board	

Tab 1.1 SA(14)08 - ONS Website - Review and New Steps / SA(14)08 - Annex A

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
			<p>changes, and then other issues.</p> <p>Note: The reviewers may be reluctant to commit themselves without a deeper look and more time, but we should get an assessment of the risks, albeit guarded.</p>					
4	Assurance of new plan for taking forward website developments	To provide ONS ELT and the Authority Board with assurance that the new plan for developing our website is sound and deliverable. Will be in two parts – plans for the new “alpha” site and plans for any further development of the current site. Also including governance of website related activities.	<p>IN PROGRESS. A paper is being drafted that will set out options.</p> <p>We are continuing with the Discovery phase in the process of building a new website (Discovery – Alpha – Beta - Live), partnering with the Open Data Institute. They have provided an initial thoughtpiece on potential options. The best way to test the concepts within this thoughtpiece is to build an inexpensive prototype (£70K) which we can demonstrate to stakeholders ahead of moving into an Alpha phase. This prototype will include several months of user testing and design work that we have been unable to make live on our existing site, but will only take a small slice of our existing content. It will be based on up to date web development principles (eg responsive design for mobile devices). We have a planning</p>	Complete initial scoping phase for 25 March Authority Board, but expect longer term assistance needed from external sources.	Guy Goodwin	Likely to draw on GDS and Open Data Institute (who are already involved) for assurance of the plan for the alpha site. Will also draw on the range of other reviews and assurances regarding plans for any further developments to existing site; possibly Thoughtworks.	ELT, then Authority Board	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
			<p>meeting with ODI during week commencing 17 March and early indications are that we will be able to work over a two month period to deliver. At this point we would like to come back to the Board – and other stakeholders eg GDS - to demo and discuss our findings, before gaining approval to move into an Alpha phase.</p> <p>In preparation for this, and to ensure we can move at pace, we have sent out a pre-market engagement to 17 companies on a long list from the Digital Services Framework. This asks for expressions of interest in providing expertise to help us build the Alpha.</p>					
5	IT Capability / Maturity assessment	Establish a baseline for our current IT capability and maturity in the broadest sense, so that future plans can be built on a shared understanding of current capability. Will help the new IT leaders refresh the IT strategy and develop an improvement plan.	<p>SETTING UP.</p> <p>Discussed requirements and availability of tools / models with Gartner 20 Feb. They have made an initial verbal proposal. Proposal from Gartner being worked up and is expected w/c 10 March.</p> <p>Initial discussions indicate that costs will be in the range of £90 - £100k and will take 20 days elapsed time. The proposal will indicate when Gartner can start this work.</p>	<p>Phase 1 - we will aim for an initial indication of maturity by end April.</p> <p>Phase 2 – expect deeper dives to follow, depending on findings of Phase 1.</p>	Terry Compton	External organisation using industry standard maturity model.	ELT, then ONS Board	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
			In the meantime we are working with GDS to identify other possible suppliers for this work. From this we have identified a standard fixed price capability healthcheck from Deloitte that will cost £56k and meet our needs. The healthcheck will take two people four weeks to complete. This is currently the preferred option.					
6	Review of testing environments	The inadequacy of the website test environment was at the heart of the problem, so we need to review whether there is a wider issue with test environments and test strategies that could affect other mission critical systems.	<p>IN PROGRESS.</p> <p>Jon Blake and Janet Giles have started work on this. The work is now in two phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review of testing environments for the website; and 2. review of testing environments for wider IT developments. <p>A draft paper is complete for phase 1 and is being shared with Ian Cope and Claire Stretch to check alignment with WDA work.</p> <p>Terry has also commissioned the acquisition of a log auditing tool to ensure we can properly monitor and filter logs from the website in future.</p>	<p>Phase 1 report to ELT by end March.</p> <p>Initial report and assessment on both phases to ELT in April.</p>	<p>Terry Compton</p> <p>Ritin Patel</p>	Jon Blake, ONS Head of Technical Strategy.	ELT, and possibly ONS Board	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
7	ONS capability assessment	A high level assessment of ONS capability across all of its business functions – including statistical areas as well as all corporate services. Will provide a helicopter view of the areas of ONS’s business that give greatest cause for concern.	<p>IN PROGRESS. Discussed at ELT Team Development event 10/11 Feb. Glen mentioned need for this in February Authority Board.</p> <p>Instigated research into appropriate tools, including EFQM and the existing value engineering approach that is already applied to ONS statistical production areas.</p> <p>Workshop held on 3 March, including Graham Sharp (Continuous Improvement), to identify principles for the tool or model. Agreed a framework for the tool to assess where we are most vulnerable and are now in the process of critiquing this against Major Projects Authority, Value Engineering work and the EFQM.</p> <p>This will be applied across ONS. Depending on the results, this could be repeated annually.</p>	Tool to be distributed by end of March, work conducted in April and analysed in May to provide a first pass through the model by end May.	Neil Wooding	This will be an in-house assessment that will complement existing tools such as value engineering and the Audit Committee’s assurance map.	ELT and ONS Board or Audit and Risk Committee.	I
8	Review of Authority wide IT [recommendation in Crine review]	Expect to focus on mobile computing, desktop access to digital media etc, rather than underlying statistical infrastructure and applications.	SETTING UP. Authority Board agreed to form sub-group to scope this. ONS reps will be Neil Wooding (SIRO), Laura Dewis (Head of Digital Publishing), Jon Blake (ONS Technical Strategy). Names provided to Authority Secretariat.	To be determined - awaiting information on sub-group. Interim RDI Director starts 10 March. Neil and Sarah to brief him w/c 10 March.	Ian Cope Ritin Patel	To be determined	ELT and then Authority Board (?)	

SA(14)08 - Annex A - Summary of Web Assurance Review and Timeline

Ref	Source of Assurance	Purpose	Current status	Timescale	Executive Lead	Conducted by	Reports to	Partha mapping
			Initiated review of social media which will feed in to this. Also moving ahead with installing Wifi in all offices.					
9	Review of IT and Digital leadership roles and organisational structure	Advice to DG on the organisational design that will deliver the most effective IT and Digital transformation.	UNDERWAY. Interviews held w/c 17 Feb. Meeting to discuss findings with Chris Jones and David Best at end Feb. Review being written up and a draft to Neil w/c 10 March.	To ELT Business 24 March for discussion and ELT Strategy 11 April. Jil to be briefed 3 April.	Neil Wooding	Government Digital Services - using Chris Jones (Indigo Blue, ex BNFL, GSK, Remploy), supported by ONS staff.	ONS DG ELT Business NS ELT Strategy	
10	Appoint interim Director to replace Paul Woobey as Research, Development & Infrastructure Director.	Filling the vacancy permanently is taking time, so appointing an interim Director will strengthen our IT and Digital leadership more quickly. The focus will be on IT rather than methodology and research.	COMPLETE	Ritin Patel was appointed as the RDI Director and started on 10 March.	Neil Wooding	GDS assistance, drawing on their "interims bench". They have a number of high quality IT / Digital leaders that are ready to be deployed across Whitehall Departments.		
11	Appoint interim Deputy Director, covering our Application Development & Support Division.	Terry Compton retires at the end of March, and we are working with GDS to select an interim to replace him, following an unsuccessful attempt to recruit suitable permanent candidates.	IN PROGRESS. Discussed with agencies 19 Feb. 15 CVs of potential candidates received. Sifting underway and decisions on shortlist will be discussed with Ritin on 13 March. Neil, Terry, David Best and Ritin will interview candidates.	ASAP – during March	Neil Wooding	Now drawing on GDS "interims bench".		

Extracts from Partha Dasgupta's comments

It is unclear what the sum of the parts amounts to and over what time period.

What the Board wants:

- A We understand what caused the recent significant failure definitively and swiftly.
- B What can be done in the short term to improve the stability of the site given (A)?
- C Determine what resources and spend are required to do (B) and what assurance can be provided to the Board that the site would then be stable
- D Understand what needs to be done to enable deployment of further upgrades to the current site and what sources of assurance can be provided to substantiate this.
- E Understand what dependencies there are to achieve (D) and what trade-offs there might be (time period, money etc).
- F Provide the Board with assurance that governance of the web related activities will improve and that risk assessment will be revised to include some external component of IT expertise to provide management with comfort.
- G Set out the medium term strategic options to the Board for the website, including the pros and cons of alternative approaches.

There are some other strategic pieces of work that need to be done:

- H Determine the model for IT governance in the organisation.
- I Determine our internal capability and concentration risk of our current IT team to reduce the reliance on individuals.

An Introduction to ThoughtWorks

1. As part of the external assurance following the unsuccessful taxonomy deployment, we have engaged **ThoughtWorks**, a Government Digital Service (GDS) approved supplier.
2. ThoughtWorks are a global company - 2500 staff in 12 countries - founded over twenty years ago in Chicago with the aim of attracting and employing the best knowledge workers in the world - building a community based on attitude, aptitude and integrity. They describe themselves as a software company and a "community of passionate, purpose-led individuals" that "think disruptively to deliver technology to address our clients' toughest challenges, all while seeking to revolutionize the IT industry and create positive social change"..
3. They are experts in Agile project management, continuous delivery (streamlining the build-test-release cycle) and automated testing. They offer services in software design and delivery, consultancy and training. Their consultancy is focussed on user experience, system architectures, agile software delivery, testing strategies and software release processes ie all the things we are looking for support with.
4. The ThoughtWorks literature says that they have built up extensive experience in delivering mission critical applications and platforms when failure simply is not an option and deadlines/budget criteria cannot be moved. They claim to have seen many times the root causes of why projects fail and the most dynamic way of resolving them. They claim to be technology agnostic and with extensive experience in traditional mainstream software languages such as Java, .NET, and CSS as well as emerging technologies such as Clojure, HTML5 and Scala.
5. We understand that ONS have not commissioned Thoughtworks before, and have no direct links with them, although they have undertaken extensive work within government bodies on Agile consulting, Agile delivery and transformation programmes. Departments that they have worked with, or supplied Agile tools to, include: Cabinet Office, Ofgem, BIS, GDS, Department of Transport, TfL, Department of Energy & Climate Change, DWP and the Insolvency Service. They have a comprehensive list of clients in the private, including large and small companies, and voluntary sectors (Siemens, Nokia, Media Companies, Samsung, Amnesty International etc).
6. ThoughtWorks have presented at various conferences before and ONS staff are aware that they have a growing reputation in the digital field. Indeed, they may well offer potential as long term partners in the digital/IT arena. Ofgem have recently used them to support the build of systems to support the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive programme at DECC and spoke glowingly about their contribution.
7. The initial scoping meeting of what we require them to do to provide external assurance also gave reassurance that they could support us well in this particular area of work but also supply an appropriate level of challenge. They are likely to be challenging and this is seen as required if we are to make progress and provide reassurance.
8. You can find out more on Thoughtworks through their website at: <http://www.thoughtworks.com/> . There is an About Us section to their website, as well as details on clients, services and products.

Website Assurance: Timeline 2014

Assurance stream	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1 Taxonomy deployment	1					
2 Wider PPM lessons	2					
3 Risks of future deployments		3	Remedial actions			
4 New website plan		4		Delivery		
5 IT capability / maturity		5				
6 Testing environments		6				
7 ONS capability		7				
8 Authority wide IT		? 8		?		
9 IT & Digital leadership / structure	9					
10 Interim Director RDI	10					
11 Interim DD App Dev & Support	11					
Authority Board dates		25		1	5	31

Notes:

- i) we will be able to advise on any further deployments towards the end of April
- ii) we are aiming to bring the new website plan along with further advice on deployments to the May Authority Board

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED

Office of Government Commerce

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OGC Gateway™ Process
Review 0: Strategic assessment

Version number:	Final
Date of issue to SRO:	13 th February 2014
SRO:	Guy Goodwin
Department:	Office for National Statistics Swyddfa Ystadegau Gwladol
OGC Gateway™ Review dates:	3 rd to 5 th February 2014

OGC Gateway™ Review Team Leader:

Andy Spriggs

OGC Gateway™ Review Team Members:

Steph Gray

Pat Murray

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment

Programme Title: Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)

Privacy Marking: UNCLASSIFIED

OGC Gateway Delivery Confidence Assessment

<u>Delivery Confidence Assessment</u>	Amber
<p>There are a number of factors that put the Improving Dissemination Programme in a sound position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ONS website has improved; interviewees cited the better navigation and search facilities (although there is still some way to go on these) and the quality and standardisation of the content; • The response to the data visualisation work has been positive not only via social media but also via direct use in the media; • The quality and commitment of the team; • The open data and user insight work is progressing well; • The recruitment of new team members has been successfully completed; • There is broad agreement on the problem with the current website technology and what the new approach should be. <p>This review took place in the week following a failure of the ONS website, caused by the latest attempt to load a new taxonomy on to the website. This was unsuccessful and, at the time of the review, it has been unclear whether the existing website architecture will be able to support the planned taxonomy. Clearly, this puts successful delivery of the programme in doubt and we note that the programme faces several other challenges as it moves forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website technology needs to be replaced, but the digital strategy that the new website will support is not yet clearly articulated and its implementation is not yet fully planned and agreed; • Progress on cultural change within ONS, in support of digital dissemination via the website, is patchy with accountability and control divided; • Understanding of the Agile approach to website development is not yet embedded within the organisation; • It is not yet clear how the programme will be closed and demonstrate to what extent it has achieved its intended outcomes. <p>These challenges are significant, but the programme team are alert to these issues, and have responded quickly and strongly to recent events. Taken together with the quality and commitment of the programme team, we assess that successful delivery still appears feasible. We make a number of recommendations, which are listed on the next page, aimed at addressing the key challenges.</p>	

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The Delivery Confidence assessment RAG status should use the definitions below.

<u>RAG</u>	<u>Criteria Description</u>
Green	Successful delivery of the programme to time, cost and quality appears highly likely and there are no major outstanding issues that at this stage appear to threaten delivery significantly.
Amber/Green	Successful delivery appears probable however constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery.
Amber	Successful delivery appears feasible but significant issues already exist requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and if addressed promptly, should not present a cost/schedule overrun.
Amber/Red	Successful delivery of the project/programme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible.
Red	Successful delivery of the programme appears to be unachievable. There are major issues on programme definition, schedule, budget required quality or benefits delivery, which at this stage do not appear to be manageable or resolvable. The programme may need re-baselining and/or overall viability re-assessed.

Summary of Report Recommendations

The Review Team makes the following recommendations which are prioritised using the definitions below.

Ref. No.	Recommendation	Critical/ Essential/ Recommended
1.	The programme team should define critical success factors to identify when the programme has achieved its purpose.	Essential by March 2014
2.	The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and Programme Director should develop and seek approval for a collaborative cultural change activity and operating model for the ONS website.	Essential by March 2014
3.	The SRO should position the proposed Agile alpha within a programme context with appropriate governance and corporate reporting.	Essential prior to programme closure
4.	The SRO, with the support of the Programme Board, should ensure that the programme is closed in a coherent manner and provides a firm foundation for what comes next.	Essential prior to programme closure

Critical (Do Now) – To increase the likelihood of a successful outcome it is of the greatest importance that the programme/project should take action immediately.

Essential (Do By) – To increase the likelihood of a successful outcome the programme/project should take action in the near future.

Recommended – The programme/project should benefit from the uptake of this recommendation.

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment

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Background

The driving force for the programme:

The ONS website, introduced in August 2011, did not meet the standards that citizen users might have expected to enable them to easily navigate and search for content. In order to extend the reach and the use of ONS statistics, and to support the Government's Digital by Default agenda, ONS products need to be presented in an engaging way to draw the citizen and non-expert user into the world of statistics enabling them to make use of the content without significant analysis or specialist expertise.

ONS has received a considerable amount of public criticism in the media, and across government, with users of the website frustrated at not being able to find the information that they need or, if they do find something, confused and not able to easily make use of the statistics to inform their decision making.

An independent review, which positioned ONS against other National Statistical Institutes, also clearly supports the need for change.

The aims of the programme:

The Improving Dissemination Programme has the full support of the UK Statistics Authority Board and aims to ensure that:

- Official statistics achieve a greater impact on key UK decisions;
- A broader use of outputs is encouraged and facilitated;
- ONS has a website which makes it easy for people to use our data with better and more accessible content, and products that meet user needs.

This should result in the following deliverables:

- An excellent web publishing capability;
- A website with better and more accessible content;
- Content that will comprise of products that meet user needs;
- A collaborative framework enabling ONS to work with journalists, universities and other organisations, which will add value to our products and reach our target audience for us;
- A strategy for digital dissemination covering the life of the programme.

The procurement/delivery status:

There has been no significant procurement activity for this programme. IT equipment, software, ongoing IT support arrangements, specialist external research and agency staff were managed by ONS Procurement using existing Framework Agreements. It is probable that further external Agile resources will be needed to deliver the feasibility phase for the website replacement and this will use the Digital Services Framework.

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED

Current position regarding OGC Gateway™ Reviews:

This is the first Gateway review of this programme.

The Review Team has confirmed with the ONS Portfolio Delivery Unit that the Accounting Officer (the Director General of ONS) has been assured regarding the 'common causes of failure' and the skills/experience track record for the SRO and Project Manager have been reviewed. The SRO has recently attended the Major Projects Leadership Academy; he is also an accredited Gateway reviewer.

Purposes and conduct of the OGC Gateway™ Review**Purposes of the OGC Gateway™ Review**

The primary purposes of an OGC Gateway Review 0: Strategic assessment, are to review the outcomes and objectives for the programme (and the way they fit together) and confirm that they make the necessary contribution to the department's overall strategy.

Appendix A gives the full purposes statement for an OGC Gateway Review 0.

Conduct of the OGC Gateway™ Review

This OGC Gateway Review 0 was carried out from 3rd to 5th February 2014 at the ONS offices in Newport. The team members are listed on the front cover.

The 17 people interviewed are listed in Appendix B.

The review team would like to thank all those interviewed for their full engagement and openness, which contributed considerably to the review team's understanding of the programme and hence the outcome of this review. Further, the logistical arrangements worked perfectly, allowing the Team to cover significant ground in the short time available.

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED

Findings and recommendations**1: Policy and business context**

The policy pertaining to this programme is articulated in various parts of the *ONS Strategy, 2013-2023* and there was a clear understanding amongst interviewees that the programme is aligned to the strategy. The programme governance is considered sound and has provided appropriate support, guidance and challenge to the programme as it has been required. There was some feedback, discussed later, about the burden of management reporting for the programme.

While ONS is exempt from transition to GOV.UK (to preserve independence), it has chosen to align itself to the Government Digital Strategy and there is strong engagement with the Government Digital Service (GDS) team in Cabinet Office. There is also recognition that the GDS approach to managing digital services will facilitate faster, efficient and cost-effective digital development.

We heard a view that this would be a good time to pull together an ONS Digital Strategy, which reflects what already exists across the ONS Strategy, includes ONS' emerging digital ambitions and also encompasses relevant content and integration with evolving good digital practice from GDS. We understand that the intent of the strategy includes the integration of collection and distribution of statistics and "making a single home for UK Government statistics on the web". This should facilitate the programme's aim of fair and accurate use of the statistics by groupings such as politicians, journalists, academics, pressure groups, the media and 'the citizen user'. We heard about the establishment of an ONS Digital Board, which should help to align expectation and ways of working across the organisation. We were shown an early draft of a Strategic Implementation Plan which would support such a strategy and it was clear that the Digital Publishing team could continue the digital dissemination work whilst also working on the overarching strategy. The review team supports this important, relevant and pragmatic approach. While the development of the strategy may be broader and therefore strictly outside the scope of the programme, its development (led by the highly experienced Programme Director) will ensure that 'digital' can be properly articulated and prioritised as part of ONS business. The review team believes this will also promote executive buy-in, leadership and 'energy' to support delivery of digital products based on user need.

At the review planning meeting, the review team was asked to provide an opinion on whether the programme would be a candidate for inclusion in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). In the intervening period, it was agreed that the programme should not be on the GMPP; the review team supports this decision.

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED**2: Business Case and stakeholders**

The Outline Business Case was produced in September 2013 and then followed a successful ONS, GDS and HM Treasury (HMT) approval path by the end of October 2013. Those interviewed were clear that, while approval was given, it was unlikely that HMT would consider allocating any additional funds if the programme overspent. Further, HMT advised that, in the event of pressure on ONS budget, this is one programme where it would expect ONS to demonstrate flexibility and to articulate this in the Full Business Case (FBC). At this time, the FBC has received ONS approval and will shortly be forwarded to Cabinet Office for GDS review.

The benefits realisation plan for the programme uses a similar approach to that for the 2011 Census. The major quantitative component is the time saved by “UK plc” reaching key decisions using ONS data. While the logic for this approach is understood and defensible, it is unusual in that these benefits cannot be measured and, even if they were, would not be realised by ONS. Even the recipient Government Departments are unlikely to either identify the savings or their source. We feel that a benefits commentary, explaining the approach and highlighting that the benefits are indicative (and not measurable) may help to provide a fuller context.

The key qualitative benefit of the programme is to build and protect the credibility of the organisation, which has suffered because of the quality of its public-facing website in recent years.

In the absence of true measurable and collectable benefits, it is hard for the programme to demonstrate impact. We recommend that the team establish more specific critical success factors, for each of the outcomes expressed in the business case and benefits map, which enable ONS to define the point at which the deliverables have been successfully completed. These might cover all outcomes derived from programme changes such as implementing the new taxonomy, open data sets and API, search facilities and richer content.

Recommendation 1: The programme team should define critical success factors to identify when the programme has achieved its purpose.

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3: Management of intended outcomes

The programme, once complete, should deliver IT-enabled business change to the organisation. Interviewees provided consistent views that this change has not yet occurred. We were told of an ongoing silo mentality that is hard to break down and is threatening organisation-wide implementation. There have been some successes, with the level of standardisation on published information increasing markedly; however, some business units cited the nature of their business, the short lead time for publishing and the uniqueness of their dataset as reasons for non-compliance. 'Uniqueness' may have had a historical impact too, with the extensive customisation of the existing website possibly contributing to its current instability.

One-to-one engagement with statisticians has resulted in a more unified approach and the successes achieved are worthy of a wider audience, highlighting that the proposed changes are beneficial to all, while addressing more difficult issues in an open and collaborative manner. Ultimately, this can drive ONS towards a corporate desire and ethic for consistency in delivery that is then supported by the website (rather than driven by the website). A truly collaborative approach and pride in the ONS identity will follow if business units are empowered to develop the business solution with the programme team. This will require investment in time by the already stretched business units, but the review team believes the time spent produces significant dividends. The review team suggests that the programme team should review its internal stakeholder engagement in support of cultural change and invest in greater business unit engagement to listen and develop a unified solution.

The review team has worked on a number of IT-enabled business change programmes and believe that these tend to be more successful with a single co-located team. In this case, the IM members of the team were located in Titchfield, as they felt they needed to be close to their development environment; this meant that they were not always as connected to the programme as they might have been.

A further challenge faced by the Digital Publishing team is that they have accountability for the website, but no formal control over editorial content (owned by the business) and technology (owned by IM). It would be worthwhile to establish how accountability and control will be aligned and then to develop new roles and responsibilities for the business-as-usual operating model.

In summary, the programme team is tasked with 'dramatically' improving dissemination of statistics online. A bottom-up approach has allowed the programme team to achieve incremental improvements in many cases, but there are those reluctant to adopt the new approach. The programme team should engage with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to confirm the way forward and gain their support for greater collaboration and standardisation.

Recommendation 2: The SRO and Programme Director should develop and seek approval for a collaborative cultural change activity and operating model for the ONS website.

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Delivery of programme objectives is endangered by the current web publishing model and associated tools. The need for a new ONS publishing tool underpinning the website was commonly accepted by interviewees, and several described their ambition to create an 'alpha' prototype using an Agile development approach. However, we heard sharply different interpretations of Agile in the context of ONS and the review team has some concerns that ONS should avoid repeating previous mistakes if an Agile approach is adopted.

As context, we heard that technical delivery of the Web Data Access (WDA) project was outsourced and run under 'Agile' methods. The project was delivered significantly late and over budget; however, under the fixed-price, partly fixed-scope, contract, the bulk of the cost overrun was borne by the supplier. Some interviewees felt this was a positive conclusion to draw from the experience. The review team feels that this is not a model for the future, but should not colour perceptions of Agile in ONS. Successful Agile projects involve close, constructive working between customer and supplier as a single team, where cost, time and scope are controlled.

Looking to the future, an ONS alpha site should be developed as a project within an environment which supports the business change needed to embed a genuinely Agile way of working based on the Government Digital Service model:

- a single multidisciplinary business and IM team combining the right skills;
- short fixed development sprints with tangible outputs;
- honest and open communication with internal customers via the product manager, to set and revise priorities;
- iterative testing with the full range of intended users.

Such an integration would also start to develop corporate trust in the Agile development approach, which is likely to be the norm for website development in the immediate future.

Based on a firm understanding of user need, development of an alpha is commonly an opportunity to trial technologies and processes at small scale, in order to seek feedback. It is as much an opportunity for ONS to learn about the implications for procurement, finance, communication and governance of an Agile approach as it is about delivering functional software and should be viewed in this way. Specifically, the project needs to address HMT concerns about variable costs and scope - possibly by agreeing a fixed contingency budget and tightly managing scope within this. The review team would point out that the issue of funding Agile projects faces all parts of Government and ONS should look to GDS to strategically support this way of working.

To give this project support at the highest levels of the organisation, and manage dependencies with other work, the review team feels it should be positioned within a programme of IT-enabled business change to ensure support from other ONS corporate functions, whether this is the remainder of the IDP programme or a successor.

It is important that an Agile approach is positioned appropriately within programme governance arrangements, and that ONS recognises that reporting may take a different form from what has been produced so far. The team needs the space and focus to work effectively, but should be expected to demonstrate the conventional

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elements of an Agile project: frequent, regular outputs; demonstrable communication between internal/external customers and the project team; and a current definition of scope, up to date at all times.

Recommendation 3: The SRO should position the proposed Agile alpha within a programme context with appropriate governance and corporate reporting.

The review team heard that some members of the team feel hamstrung in their ability to deliver the change set out in the IDP programme, due to the lack of a unified team delivering the ONS website with editorial control over its content.

Currently, Digital Publishing sets and polices the standards, but authority to publish is vested in the community of around 400 publishers around the organisation, given a desire in some parts of the organisation to avoid delays in publishing releases. Quality is improving, but the Executive Leadership Team should consider whether a different publishing model should be adopted with firmer editorial control (which shouldn't be confused with ownership of the statistical content and its sign-off) vested in a single dedicated team - as it is on GOV.UK - and whether this might further improve the quality and compliance of published outputs. We understand that this model is currently implemented for some outputs but by no means all of them.

As described above, we heard that in terms of technical development, the split resourcing model between content managed by Digital Publishing and development/infrastructure managed by Information Management represents an obstacle to enhancing the ONS website.

ONS manages technical development both in-house and through external suppliers. Whilst external suppliers bring technical expertise, they necessarily lack organisational and user insight into the ONS' customers, and we heard from some that knowledge transfer from consultants to in-house staff could be improved, where they are used. The review team heard from some interviewees that the necessary skills for Agile development were not currently embedded in the organisation, and feel that achieving this will require more than ad hoc training or coaching. Based on the review team's experience of delivering projects using Agile methods - and supporting them over the long term - we suggest a blended approach to using external contractors who bring Agile project/product management and development expertise, working closely with (preferably Newport-based) staff who can take on and support a new platform in the long-term.

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4: Risk management

The risk register is available with risks clearly stated, recently assessed and updated with owners assigned and mitigation actions noted. The Programme and Delivery Boards are aware of the risks and it is clear that the last Delivery Board meeting noted an amended major risk. The programme board and ONS in general appear to have a cautious appetite for risk in general, re-enforced by experiences with previous web-related projects.

The review team believe there is a risk associated with the programme being heavily dependent upon a single individual's digital knowledge, leadership and change skills. This risk could be usefully added to the risk register and mitigation actions identified. The SRO will also need to consider succession planning arrangements.

The recent problems with the existing publishing platform may lead to a change of programme direction. Assessing changes from a risk management perspective, then documenting and sharing these with the Programme and Delivery Boards may aid quicker buy-in.

5: Review of current outcomes

A consensus exists inside and outside the organisation that the ONS website has improved markedly since the low point of autumn 2011, and that IDP is delivering real, incremental improvements.

In terms of visual design and site structure, interviewees praised the more engaging 'theme' pages and the greater use of imagery on the homepage. They felt search - though problematic - was improving. We heard that content published on the site is now much more compliant with best practice for statistical publishing, with over 95% of releases meeting the standard under the 'healthcheck' scheme. A greater proportion of time-critical releases are hitting the 1 minute, 9.30am 'window' than previously. Corporate information about the organisation has been updated and improved.

The commitment and professionalism of all the teams involved at ONS in publishing shines through. There is praise for the way the teams handled the technical problems with the recent deployment of taxonomy changes. The lateral thinking shown by the Digital Publishing team, and corporate use of social media during the website outage was engaging and responsive, and neutralised some of the online criticism.

Despite the devolved publishing model and the reality that the Digital Publishing team does not have the final editorial say over what appears on the website, the review team also heard that many internal customers are taking on board the feedback from the Digital Publishing team and improving the quality of their published content voluntarily.

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However, there is still some way to go before the platform can fairly be described as excellent, and this again is recognised both within and outside the organisation:

- Site search still does not return sufficiently relevant results, and some external users have become conditioned to search the site using external search engines;
- Categorisation of content is still criticised as reflecting an arcane government taxonomy of topics, rather than a structure which is intelligible to the outside world (work to address this has been delayed by technical issues);
- Dead links, in particular to datasets, persist, making journeys from data.gov.uk to XML or CSV files frustrating for data users;
- Content quality remains variable, with a significant minority of pages not meeting internal standards, and corrections being made post-publication. This may be a symptom of the highly-devolved publishing model with some of the 400 publishers only using the complex CMS system infrequently.

There is common ground that the current CMS is not fit for purpose. We heard that the Tridion implementation is behind the current version; has been extensively customised beyond normal levels; has a very large user base and complex workflow configuration; and, is difficult to support, even with the specialist resource within the Information Management (IM) team. This increases the difficulty, effort and risk when applying further changes and enhancements. The conclusion drawn by all interviewees is that the organisation should replace this CMS with a new, simpler publishing tool.

With a number of parallel programmes in operation within ONS which involve an element of web delivery, we heard reports of some bottlenecks which introduce delays to the delivery of milestones, such as the limited access to server test environments and testing staff. There are also interdependencies between programmes and projects which do not seem to be actively managed, for example the dependency of IDP on the outputs from the Web Data Access (WDA) programme, which have been significantly delayed. We understand that it is the role of the portfolio management function to ensure, through careful oversight of the programmes in its portfolio, that priorities and dependencies are discussed and agreed at an organisational level. We suggest that the programme team should engage proactively with the portfolio management function to ensure that dependencies are understood and managed across the organisation.

Though the perception is that publishing has improved, more evidence is required that the user needs of the full range of external customers are being met: compliance with formal standards for statistical publishing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for ensuring this.

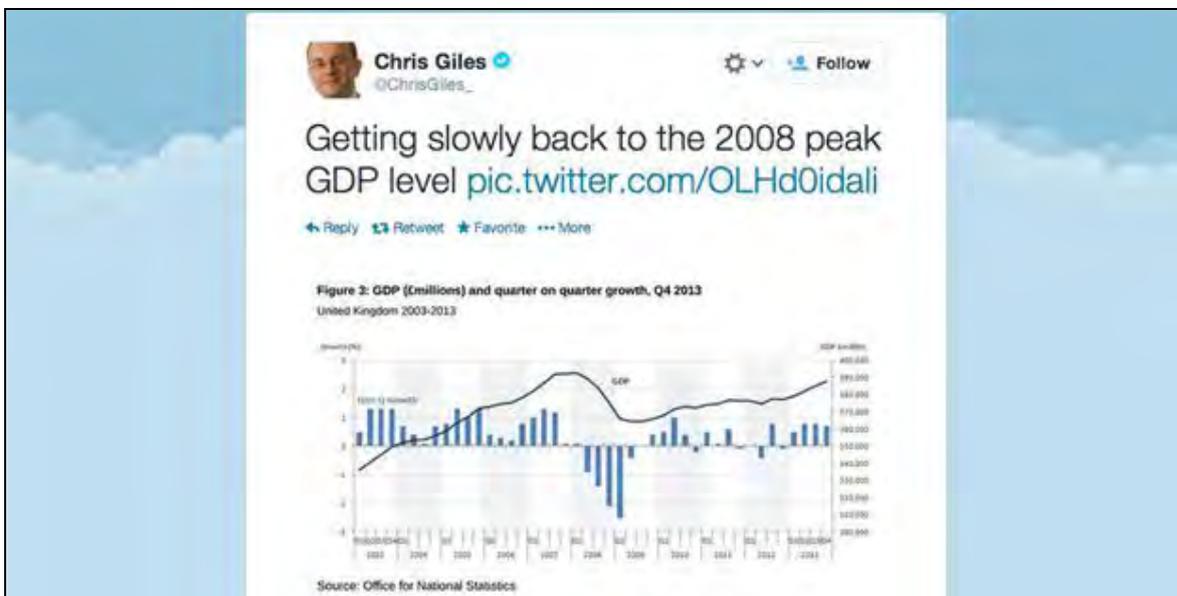
Early indications suggest that the broader range of outputs such as data visualisations and interactive infographics being produced by the Digital Publishing team are being well received by the intended audiences. There is an appreciation from all interviewees that ONS should be innovating in this way, and that not all experiments will necessarily be successful.

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There are examples of previously critical journalists taking simple ONS visualisations and sharing them in social media, in order to break news quickly and as a precursor to their own analysis and commentary, for example:



https://twitter.com/ChrisGiles_/status/428099438200909824

We heard that the external media environment for this work is increasingly favourable: journalists' training in, and reporting of, statistics is felt to be becoming more mature, and the emergence of services like Ampp3d from Trinity Mirror Group implies an appetite for data angles to current stories and wide dissemination via social media.

These are still early days for this new approach, and much of the feedback is anecdotal. To ensure that ONS derives real value from this work, it is important that the team's work is based on an understanding of audience needs, and evaluates the reach and impact of these new formats for dissemination. Crucially, the organisation needs to ensure that investment of time and effort in creating and promoting sophisticated 'rich' content represents value for money greater than simply publishing basic information in a clear, accessible format.

There is frustration that some of the pioneering formats for dissemination being trialled under the programme are inaccessible to users within ONS due to restrictions on video and other content within the corporate IT network. This makes it harder for the team to engage colleagues with their work.

6: Readiness for the next phase – Delivery of outcomes

While there is a plan forming to move to a new publishing tool, the existing ONS website is "a factory that can never shut down". The current platform must continue to operate, be updated and supported. Users are likely to expect continuous improvements to be made, even while the new publishing tool is being constructed.

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The review team recognise that incremental fixes and improvements continue to be made to the current website, such as broken links to datasets, in parallel with the alpha build of a new website platform. Given the problems with recent deployment, it is not yet clear what level of incremental improvement is going to be possible. As soon as the situation is clarified, the programme team should clearly define what these Business As Usual activities and incremental improvements are. This may require broad communication to manage business and management expectations.

While there is a consensus on what should be done next, there were more varied and less passionate views on what is the most appropriate change route. These views ranged from extending the scope of the IDP programme to include an alpha build of a new website platform; to closing IDP and starting a new programme immediately. There was more of a consensus that a simple IT project was neither appropriate nor likely to succeed, and this is reflected in Recommendation 3 above.

The review team is concerned that the programme may be closed without achieving its envisaged outcomes fully. We have already recommended the development and reporting of critical success factors. We note the following areas of work to fully achieve the outcomes and realise the benefits:

- Articulation of what Agile means for programme teams, the ELT, support functions and business units within ONS (this includes being open about the challenges and lessons learned from previous Agile projects);
- Put in place governance that demonstrates trust and confidence in programme teams to deliver in a truly empowered, Agile manner;
- Set expectations for a “light touch” change programme that does not impose disproportionate governance, administration and reporting burdens on programme teams;
- Explain and direct the new ways of working around a unified ONS publishing model;
- Set expectations and support that intelligently identify and engage more external digital skills and expertise, with a strong emphasis on achieving a skill transfer to ONS in-house staff;
- In defining the scope of future development, recognise the cost of technical debt in customising platforms extensively;
- Control customisation to maintain website platform integrity and reliability;
- Continue to develop a culture of digital products that meet real user needs.

Recommendation 4: The SRO, with the support of the Programme Board, should ensure that the programme is closed in a coherent manner and provides a firm foundation for what comes next.

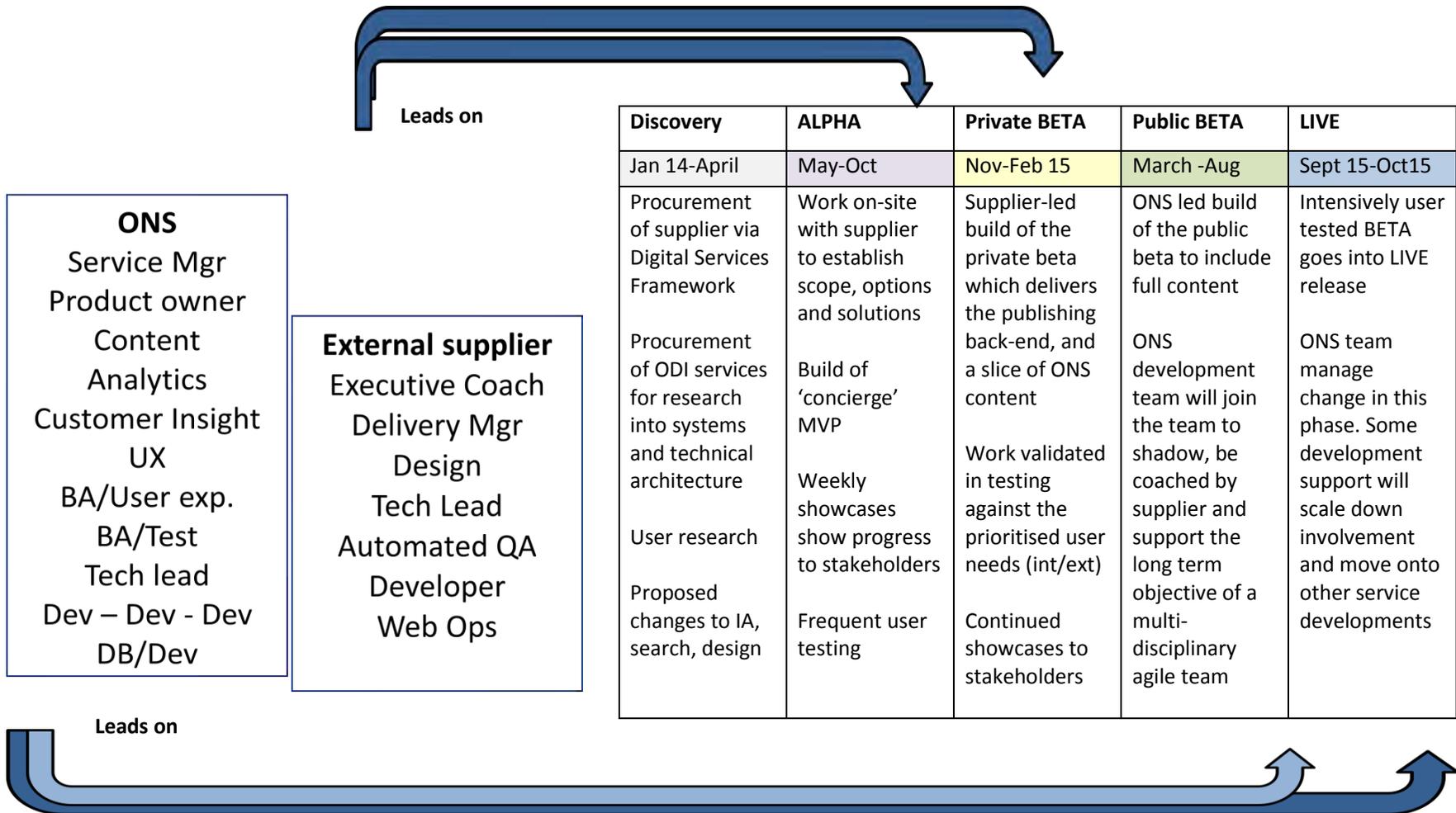
OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED**APPENDIX A****Purposes of OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**

- Review the outcomes and objectives for the programme (and the way they fit together) and confirm that they make the necessary contribution to overall strategy of the organisation and its senior management.
- Ensure that the programme is supported by key stakeholders.
- Confirm that the programme's potential to succeed has been considered in the wider context of the organisation's delivery plans and change programmes, and any interdependencies with other programmes or projects in the organisation's portfolio and, where relevant, those of other organisations.
- Review the arrangements for leading, managing and monitoring the programme as a whole and the links to individual parts of it (e.g. to any existing projects in the programme's portfolio).
- Review the arrangements for identifying and managing the main programme risks (and the individual project risks), including external risks such as changing business priorities.
- Check that provision for financial and other resources has been made for the programme (initially identified at programme initiation and committed later) and that plans for the work to be done through to the next stage are realistic, properly resourced with sufficient people of appropriate experience, and authorised.
- After the initial Review, check progress against plans and the expected achievement of outcomes.
- Check that there is engagement with the market as appropriate on the feasibility of achieving the required outcome.
- Where relevant, check that the programme takes account of joining up with other programmes, internal and external.

OGC Gateway™ Review 0: Strategic assessment**Programme Title:** Improving Dissemination Programme (IDP)**Privacy Marking:** UNCLASSIFIED**APPENDIX B****Interviewees (in chronological order)**

Name	Role
Annabel Fletcher	HM Treasury: Spending Team
Guy Goodwin	ONS: Analysis and Dissemination Director; SRO
Laura Dewis	ONS: Deputy Director for Digital Publishing; Prog. Director
Sam Hall	ONS: Head of Publishing Operations
Matt Jukes	ONS: Head of Digital Content
Alison Saunders	ONS: Head of User Insight and Innovation
Paul Layland	ONS: Chief Finance Officer
John Roberts	ONS: Improving Dissemination Programme Manager
Darren Barnes	ONS: Open Datasets and API Manager
Sir Andrew Dilnot	UK Statistics Authority: Chair
Ceinwin Blake	ONS: Asst Director, Applications Development and Support
Kevin McConway	Open University: Professor of Applied Statistics
Antonio Acuna	Cabinet Office: Government Digital Service
Glen Watson	ONS: Director General
Tom Smith	Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion: Director
Will Moy	Full Fact: Director
Ian Cope	ONS: Population and Demography Director

SA(14)08 – Annex C – Roles and responsibilities in the redevelopment of the new ONS website



SA(14)09 – End Year Financial Report 2013/14

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)09

End year Financial Report 2013/14

The UK Statistics Authority Annual Reports and Accounts are published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see these documents go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/what-we-do/corporate-information/annual-report-and-resource-accounts/index.html>

SA(14)10– Budget 2014/15

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)10

Budget 2014/15

The UK Statistics Authority's allocation is published on the HM Treasury website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/main-supply-estimates-2014-to-2015>

SA(14)11 – Revised Criteria for Assessment

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)11

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Revised Criteria for Assessment

The Programme of Assessment is published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/programme-of-assessment/index.html>

SA(14)12/13 –Authority Strategy

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(14)12/13

***Authority Strategy Report on Progress 2013/14
Authority Strategy 2014/15***

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The Authority Strategy has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statistics-authority-statement-of-strategy.pdf>